

Glossary

Aseptic presentation: Maintaining the sterility of the contents as a sterilized package is opened and the contents are removed.

Biological indicators (BIs): Test systems containing viable microorganisms providing a defined resistance to a specified sterilization process.

Chemical indicators (CIs): Devices used to monitor the presence or attainment of one or more of the parameters required for a satisfactory sterilization process, or are used in specific tests of sterilization equipment.

Cleaning: Removal of contamination from an item to the extent necessary for further processing or for the intended use

Container system, rigid sterilization: Sterilization containment device designed to hold medical devices for sterilization, storage, transportation, and aseptic presentation of contents

Containment device: Reusable rigid sterilization container, instrument case, cassette, or organizing tray intended for use in health care facilities for the purpose of containing reusable medical devices for sterilization

Cool-down: Period of time after steam sterilization during which containment devices should remain untouched on the sterilizer rack outside the sterilizer

Cycle: Defined sequence of operational steps designed to achieve sterilization and carried out in a sealed chamber

Dry time: Time required to dry steam-sterilized items inside the sterilizer.

Exposure time: Period for which the process parameters are maintained within their specified tolerances.

Filter, container: Device secured to the rigid sterilization container system lid and/or bottom that serves to allow passage of air and sterilants yet provides a microbial barrier

Filter retention mechanism, container: Mechanism that secures disposable filters in place

Flash sterilization: Process designed for the steam sterilization of patient care items for immediate use. See also ANSI/AAMI ST79

Gasket, container: Pliable strip that serves as a seal between the lid and the base of a reusable rigid sterilization container to prevent entry of contaminants.

Instructions for use (IFU): Written instructions provided by the device manufacturer to direct users on the care, maintenance, reprocessing, and use of a device.

Instrument case/cassette, sterilization: Sterilization containment device that consists of a lid and a base with means to allow sterilant penetration and removal, and that is enclosed in a sterile barrier system if sterility is to be maintained.

Latching mechanism, container: Mechanical device that secures the lid of a reusable rigid sterilization container system to the bottom of the container.

Load: Similar items requiring the same sterilization parameters that are sterilized together

pH: Measure of alkalinity or acidity. A pH of 7 on a scale of 0 to 14 is neutral (neither acid nor alkaline); below 7 is acid and a pH above 7 is alkaline.

Sterilizer: Apparatus used to sterilize medical devices, equipment, and supplies by direct exposure to the sterilizing agent.

Tamper-evident device, container: Seal or disposable "lock" that is generally secured on the container

latching mechanism and that indicates whether the container has been opened.

Tray: Basket, with or without a lid, that has perforated sides or bottom, that holds instruments, and that is either enclosed in sterilization wrap or a pouch or placed inside a container for sterilization

Valve, container: Mechanical device that opens during sterilization to allow air evacuation and sterilant penetration and closes after sterilization to prevent contamination